

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12 IO-12

DPW-01 AID-20 RSR-01 EUR-25 /140 W
----- 046300

R 121000 Z MAY 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1599

INFO USDEL JEC PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 8403

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS VS

SUBJECT: GVN DIRECTOR OF POLITICAL SECURITY COMMENTS ON THE CHAU
CASE

AND ON PRISON VISITS

(A) STATE 79600; (B) STATE 85436; (C) SAIGON 7610

1. IN A CONVERSATION MAY 12 WITH AN EMBASSY OFFICER, THE DIRECTOR
OF POLITICAL SECURITY AT THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR, LT. COL.
NGUYEN VAN TAY, OFFERED THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS ON THE CASE OF
EX- DEPUTY TRAN NGOC CHAU AND ON THE GVN' POSITION CONCERNING
PRISON VISITS.

CHAU CASE

2. COL. TAY SAID THAT TRAN NGOC CHAU AND HIS BROTHER, TRAN NGOC
HIEN, ARE NOT RPT NOT CURRENTLY ON THE LIST OF 750 DETAINEES
BEING HANDED OVER TO THE COMMUNIST SIDE IN THE INITIAL SERIES
OF EXCHANGES. THOUGH HE DID NOT SAY SO, PJ STATED THEIR

NAMES HAD BEEN REMOVED FROM
THE LIST LTAAUSE# OF A LETTER
RECENTLY SENT BY CHAU TO THE GVN REQUESTING RELEASE IN RVN
TERRITORY. REFERRING TO THIS LETTER, TAY SAID THAT THE GVN WILL
CONSIDER IT CAREFULLY ON GROUNDS OF " HUMANITY." CHAU' S STATUS AS
A FORMER DEPUTY AND FORMER RVN OFFICER WOULD BE A FACTOR. TAY
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INTIMATED THAT CONSIDERATION OF CHAU' S REQUEST MIGHT ULTIMATELY BE IN THE FRAMEWORK OF TPJMC DISCUSSIONS WITH THE OTHER SIDE, UNDER ICCS SCRUTINY. HE DID NOT ELABORATE ON THIS PROCEDURE. NOR DID HE STATE WHETHER CHAU HAD SPECIFICALLY REQUESTED CHIEU HOI STATUS IN HIS LETTER OR HAD MERELY SOUGHT RELEASE IN THE RVN, SAYING HE HAD NOT PERSONALLY SEEN THE LETTER.

3. CONCERNING CHAU' S BROTHER, TAY UNDERSTOOD THAT HE TOO WANTED TO STAY IN THE RVN. HIS CASE WOULD ALSO BE GIVEN CAREFUL CONSIDERATION, THOUGH TAY ADDED THAT HIS BROTHER' S CASE WAS LESS MERITORIOUS THAN CHAU' S SINCE HIEN " WAS FORMERLY A COMMUNIST CADRE, WHEREAS CHAU WAS NOT".

VISITS TO PRISONS

4. TAY NOTED THAT TWO FOREIGN " BISHOPS" HAD COME TO VIETNAM ASKING TO VISIT PRISONS. (TAY MAY HAVE BEEN REFERRING TO THE VISIT OF BISHOP GUMBLETON OF DETROIT AND FATHER MANNING, REPORTED IN SAIGON 7418 .) TAY EXPRESSED BITTERNESS OVER THE BROAD SCOPE OF THEIR REQUEST, AND ALSO OVER THE FACT THAT THEY HAD HELD A PRESS CONFERENCE CRITICAL OF THE GVN BEFORE THE PRIME MINISTER HAD REPLIED TO THEIR APPLICATION. TAY NOTED THAT VISITORS OFTEN COME TO SOUTH VIETNAM WITH A ONE- SIDED VIEW OF DETENTION PROBLEMS, CRITICAL OF THE GVN BUT NOT AT ALL CRITICAL OF POOR TREATMENT BY THE COMMUNISTS OF THEIR DETAINEES. HE IMPLIED THAT HIS RECOMMENDED APPROACH TO FUTURE REQUESTS FOR PRISON VISITS WOULD BE TO ASK WHAT THE REQUESTING PARTY HAD DONE TO INVESTIGATE CONDITIONS IN COMMUNIST PRISONS.

5. REMINDED OF PRESIDENT THIEU' S RECENT STATEMENT IN THE U. S. THAT ANYONE COULD VISIT GVN PRISONS, TAY SAID THAT PROGRAMS WERE CURRENTLY BEING PLANNED FOR GROUPS OF FOREIGN JOURNALISTS AND OTHERS TO TOUR GVN PRISONS.

WHITEHOUSE

NOTE BY OC/ T: # AS RECEIVED. WILL BE SERVICED ON REQUEST.

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